



FOREST INCOMES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (FIFES)

November 2015-November 2020 | Implementer: **ACDI/VOCA**

Working with thousands of community-based entrepreneurs and leaders from 11 Community Forests in Nimba and Grand Bassa counties, the Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability (FIFES) initiative protects biodiversity through profitable, responsible, and legally implemented forestry, agroforestry, and related natural resources management. FIFES strengthens selected forest and agricultural value chains, establish legal and management frameworks for forest enterprises, and enhance knowledge and skills for forest enterprises and landscape management.

Entrepreneurs, FIFES, and the 11 Community Forest Management Bodies, the Executive Committees and the Community Assemblies are forming stronger working relationships with one another to improve access to products and markets, improve the regulation of timber and other forest products, and increase financial benefits to both entrepreneurs and the citizens of the Community Forests.

FIFES builds trust, fosters collaboration, clarifies rules, and creates incentives for strengthening the businesses of the agroforest entrepreneurs and the Community Forest Management Structures. Stronger value chains and more accountable and inclusive management of the Community Forest resources will increase community incentives, and strengthen the institutional sustainability of forest management efforts.

Current Activities

- Assess key forest value chains and strengthen them through organizational capacity assessments and barrier analyses of community forest groups as well as providing technical support to improve the selection, harvesting, storage, and processing of forest-based products

- Work with local partners to increase their capacity for biodiversity monitoring and awareness
- Bring together key stakeholders in forest management and biodiversity monitoring in Liberia to share lessons learned and best practices
- Work with existing community forest groups to develop and finalize their community forest management plans with the government of Liberia in order to facilitate better local governance of those community forests

Accomplishments to Date

- Detailed timber VC report completed, based on literature review of Liberian domestic timber VC reports, providing a detailed action plan for tangible business opportunities for FIFES to implement.
- 102 agroforestry enterprise groups (EG) established to date, with a focus on developing a culture of business, savings, and independence.
- Over 1,000 cocoa, pepper, peanut, and oil palm farmers trained in improved production, harvest, and storage techniques.
- Establishment of demonstration farms and Farmer Field Schools to promote agroforestry better management practices, including soil and water conservation, erosion control, mulching, tree cropping/Taungya system, optimal spacing, integrated pest management, and organic fertilizer application.
- Animal Traction and Climate-Smart Agriculture Feasibility Study completed, which highlights enthusiastic support from the communities and the Ministry of Agriculture as a result of the potential of increased production, rotational systems, which promote soil fertility, and decreased labor inputs.
- Through Woman Owning Resources Together (WORTH) activities, the Community Forest Enterprise Groups are generating more income and know-how to manage their investments, with increased focus on conservation-oriented activities.
- Center for Integrated Forestry Research (CIFOR) preparing for forest resources inventories and community-managed biomonitoring systems.
- Conducting a series of trainings for forest governance structures on the Community Rights Law (CRL), bylaws, responsibilities of the key positions, and reporting guidelines. Such efforts are helping Community Forest leaders to better understand their roles and responsibilities.

Planned Outcomes

- Monitor beneficiaries to assess their awareness and understanding of forest biodiversity as well as monitor the capacity of local partners and organizations to provide support for forest-dependent communities.
- Work with 11 community forests to improve the surrounding local communities' ability to manage the forests in a sustainable and economically beneficial manner through increasing the productivity of existing value chains and promoting good governance of the management bodies for each forest.
- In 5-10 years, only community based entrepreneurs, working with the Community Forest, and using local labor, sustainably harvest and mill (either directly, or through agreements) timber

harvested from community forests and other community lands on a pre-order basis for buyers in urban centers. No outside actors harvest community timber, and no community members harvest trees without Community Forest approval.